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C A T E C H I S M

DESIGNED FOR THE YOUNG

IN THE

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCHES,

IN THE

EASTERN DISTRICT, C. W.

BY THE REV. W. SHARTS.

WILLIAMSBURGH, C. W.,

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In preparing the following pages considerable assistance has been derived from standard works in our church. The Augsburg confession was taken almost entire from Dr. Schmucker's Popular Theology, W. S.

192- Nov 1974

PART I.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

I. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

IV. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work: thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gate. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

V. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt not kill.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

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Article I.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.*a*

Article II.

And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord *b*; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, *c* suffered under Pontius Pilate, *d* was crucified, *e* dead and buried *f*. He descended into hell; *g* the third day he arose again from the dead; *h* ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; *i* from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead *j*.

Article III.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; *k* the holy Catholic (Universal) church; *l* the communion of saints; *m* the forgiveness of sins; *n* the resurrection of the body; *o* and the life everlasting. *p* Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father who art in heaven; Hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil; For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

PART II.

Of the Sacrament.

Q. What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is an ordinance appointed of God, by which the benefits purchased by the Savior are not only symbolically represented to the senses, but spiritual blessing is also actually conferred on those who faithfully use them. *p*

a Isa. 44-6. *1* Cor. 8-6. Acts 14-15. Gen. 1-1. *b* Jno. 16-28. Acts 13-33. Jno. 1-1 & 18. *c* Math. 1-18 & 25. *d* Luke 23-24, 25, 32. *e* Jno. 19-30-34. *f* Math. 27-59-60. *g* Acts 2-31. *h* 1 Cor. 15-4. *i* 1 Pet. 3-22. *j* Math. 16-27. *k* Jno. 15-26. Acts 5-3-4. *l* 1 Cor. 12-13. *m* Eph. 5-25, 29, 30. *n* Eph. 1-7. *o* Jno. 5-28, 29. *p* Thess. 4-17. *q* Jno. 6-54, 56.

Q. How many sacraments are there?

A. Two only.

Q. What are they?

A. Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Q. By whom were they instituted?

A. By Jesus Christ himself.^q

Q. Why were they instituted?

A. That the means may be afforded us for membership in his visible church on earth:—that we may remember forcibly the passion of our blessed Lord:—be redeemed from the power of death and the devil:—receive such blessings as can be imparted to us in the sacraments only, and to become fitted for heaven.^r

Q. Is it not then necessary to salvation, that all persons if possible, have these sacraments administered to them?

A. It is, and the refusal or neglect of receiving them will undoubtedly lead to the loss of the soul.^s

OF BAPTISM.

Q. What is Baptism?

A. It is the sprinkling, or pouring on of water upon a person in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by which such person is admitted a member of Christ's visible church.

Q. What is essential for Baptism?

A. Water, and the names of the Holy Trinity spoken separately. Without these there can be no baptism.^t

Q. What besides this is necessary in Baptism?

A. A possession of faith in Christ, and promises to live a godly life: renouncing the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

Q. As infants are unable to do these things, are they then proper subjects for this ordinance?

A. They are.^u

Q. What are some of the reasons for believing that it is proper that infants should be baptised?

A. 1st. That infants were admitted into the ancient church by the rite of circumcision. 2d. That we read in scripture of whole households being baptised, in which it

^qMath. 28-19. Math. 26-26, 28. ^rJno. 6-54, 57. ^sMark 16-16. ^tMath 23-19. ^uLuke 18-16.

is probable, and cannot be disproved, that there were infants. *v* 3d. That Jesus Christ says, "suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God." 4th. That infant baptism was practiced *universally* by the church from the times of the Apostles for at least fifteen hundred years. 5th. That the households, (and which undoubtedly included children,) of Lydia, of Sthephanus, of Cornelius, and of the jailor at Phillippi, were baptised upon the faith of the parents.

Q. What follows, as a necessary consequence, the disbelief of infant baptism?

A. The denial that they can be saved.

Q. What are the advantages of baptism?

A. Union with Christ's visible church, the influences of the Holy Spirit, assurance of God's favor, the promise of the pardon of sin, and of eternal life.

Q. Upon what does it depend that we receive and enjoy these advantages?

A. That we earnestly strive to keep the promises which were made at our baptism.

Q. Will it benefit us here or hereafter if, after we have arrived at the knowledge of our duty, we do not fulfil these duties?

A. It will not.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Q. What is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

A. It is the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the form of bread and wine.

Q. Is the presence of Christ in this sacrament real or spiritual.

A. Spiritual.

Q. What benefits do christians receive in partaking of this sacrament?

A. The assurance of the pardon of sin, of life, and of salvation ; inward comfort, peace and happiness, and every spiritual blessing.

Q. Does the mere eating and drinking produce these great effects?

A. It does not, but that solemn declaration, "which is

given and shed for you, for the remission of sins ;” which words besides the eating and drinking, are considered as the chief thing in this sacrament.

Q. What is necessary that the communicant be entitled to, and receive these blessings ?

A. That he partake worthily.

Q. What is it to partake worthily ?

A. To eat and drink, having sincerely repented of all our sins, and forgiven our enemies ; to believe that Christ made an atonement for our sins upon the cross ; to view the bread as Christ’s body broken for us, and the wine as his blood shed for us, and to resolve to live and die his devoted follower.

Q. What is it to partake unworthily ?

A. It is to do so thoughtlessly or irreverently, to regard the consecrated elements as mere bread and wine, to be destitute of faith in Christ ; to retain anger, or malice in the heart ; to have not repented, and to make no resolve to live a christian life.

Q. Will we receive any benefit if we partake unworthily ?

A. We will not, but on the contrary by so doing our condemnation will be increased.

Q. Is it not binding upon all christians to partake of the holy sacrament as often as they have the opportunity ?

A. It is.

Q. What are the only valid excuses for not doing so ?

A. Positive inability to attend church when it is administered.

OF CONFIRMATION,

Q. What is confirmation ?

A. It is the ceremony of admitting persons to the full privileges of the church.

Q. What qualifications are necessary for those who purpose to receive this ordinance ?

A. That they understand the nature of those promises they will be required to make ; that they have a knowledge of their duties to God, to their neighbor, and to themselves ; that they exercise repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and willingly resolve to consecrate their whole lives

to the service of the Lord.

Q. What are the peculiar advantages of confirmation ?

A. The renewal of all the blessings of the christian covenant made at their baptism ; a testimony of God's favor and goodness to them in granting them, through his ministers, all the privileges of church membership ; and confers upon them more especial grace to encounter all spiritual enemies, and to preform their christian duties.

Q. In what does confirmation differ from baptism ?

A. By baptism we are indeed admitted into the church, but not to all its privileges ; for instance, to that of partaking of the Lord's supper. Infants, by baptism, are dedicated to the Lord by their parents or sponsors. In confirmation, we devote ourselves to his service. We then renew and assume personally the promises made at our baptism, and in addition enter into others corresponding with the increase of our obligations and our privileges.

Q. From whence do we derive the practice of confirmation ?

A. From the examples of the Apostles, and the custom of the early christian church.^b

OF PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Q. What is meant by the preparatory service, or preparation for the Lord's Supper ?

A. Those services in which the church directs her members to engage a short time previous to the dispensing of the holy sacrament.

Q. What is the object of these services ?

A. That we may become rightly prepared to partake of the Lord's Supper through the means which are then used.

Q. What are the means ?

A. Directions and exhortations to self-examination and to repentance ; confession of sins ; profession of faith in Christ ; desires expressed to be delivered from sin, and to partake of God's mercy to the penitent ; resolves formed, depending upon the aid of the Holy Spirit, for the future to avoid all manner of evil, to walk circumspectly before God, and to follow after holiness ; and finally, the declaration of the absolution of sins to the truly penitent.

^bActs 8-14,17. 1 Cor. 12-28,30. Heb. 6-1,2.

Q. May not a person be really prepared and worthily partake of the Holy sacrament without using these means?

A. Certainly not without previous self-examination, confession of sins, profession of faith in Christ, and resolutions to endeavor, for the future, to avoid occasions of sin; and as these confessions and resolutions should be made in public, as well for the purpose of giving them more weight and solemnity, of satisfying our conscience, and of conforming to the usages of the church, as to give to the minister an evidence of our fitness to partake of the holy sacrament; so should we use these means in the way and manner required.

Q. What may be the consequence to those who purposely neglect or refuse to comply with this requirement of the Church?

A. The minister is authorized to refuse to such the privilege of partaking of the holy sacrament.

OF THE CHURCH.

Q. What is the visible church of Christ upon earth, commonly called The Church?

A. It is the collective body of those who profess the christian religion, consisting of all those who have been admitted to membership by baptism, and have not been deprived of it by excommunication.

Q. Who was the founder of the church?

A. God himself.

Q. God being the founder of the church, is it not the duty of every one to unite with it?

A. It is undoubtedly.

Q. What are the powers that belong to the church?

A. They are 1st. of preaching; 2d. of public prayer; 3d. of baptism; 4th. of celebrating the Lord's Supper; 5th. of confirming persons baptized; 6th. of ordaining ministers; 7th. of making laws for the governance of her members; 8th. of excommunication; 9th. of demanding maintenance.

Q. Who is the supreme head of the church?

A. Jesus Christ.

Q. Who are his representatives on earth to whom are confided the care of the church?

A. Lawfully called, and regularly ordained ministers.d

Q. *What are the various bodies of Christians termed, which have each their distinctive forms of church Government &c ?*

A. Branches of Christ's church.

Q. *Is it possible for any one body of Christians ; for any particular branch of Christ's church to be THE ONE ONLY TRUE CHURCH ?*

A. It is not.

Q. *How may a true branch of Christ's church be known ?*

A. A true branch of Christ's church, is a particular denomination of christians—by whatsoever name they may be called, in which the sacraments are duly administered by a lawful person ; which admits the fundamental doctrines of christianity as taught in the Apostolic creed ; which neither takes away, nor adds to God's holy word ; and which insists upon nothing as essential to salvation which the Bible has not declared to be so.

OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH.

Q. *From whence is the name of this our church derived ?*

A. It is termed Evangelical ; because it revived the Gospel ; that is, of the doctrine of salvation for mankind only through the merits of Christ, when it was smothered by superstition ; and " Lutheran " from the great reformer Martin Luther who in the 16th century, first dissipated the clouds, which obscured the gospel.

Q. *When may its commencement be dated ?*

A. In the year 1520, when pope Leo X. expelled Luther and his adherents from the bosom of Romish church.

Q. *When did it acquire a stable form and consistency ?*

A. In the year 1530, when the public confession of its faith was drawn up, and was presented to the diet of Augsburg.

Q. *What is the name of the confession in which the doctrines of our church are set forth ?*

A. The Augsburg Confession.

Q. *Are we bound to believe every sentiment contained in this confession ?*

A. We are not ; but that the *fundamental* doctrines of the word of God, are taught in it in a manner *substantially* correct.

Q. *What is about the number of christians in the world who profess the Augsburg Confession ?*

A. About twenty-eight millions.

Q. *Is our church bound to any particular form of church government and discipline ?*

A. It is not ; and as neither our Savior nor his apostles have prescribed any exact and entire form of Government and Discipline for the church, we conceive ourselves at liberty to adopt such forms as circumstances may require.

Q. *What are the principal characteristics in that form of government which has been adopted by the church in America ?*

A. They are 1st. Equality of ministers ; 2d. Cooperation of ruling elders as representatives of the church ; 3d. Union of the churches within the limits of a synod for the regular purposes of review and government ; 4th. An advisory union of all the different synods in one General Synod.

Q. *What officers have we in the church ?*

A. We have, 1st. Ministers ; 2d. Elders ; 3d. Deacons ; and to these are sometimes added Trustees or church Wardens.

OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Q. *What is the Christian Ministry ?*

A. It is that sacred office which was instituted by our blessed Savior for the purpose of perpetuating and extending his church upon earth, and that various duties therein might be lawfully performed.

Q. *Who may lawfully exercise this office ?*

A. Such as are inwardly called of God ; *e* and have been regularly ordained or licensed for the office by a christian church ; that is, through her ministers. *f*

Q. *How do the Holy Scriptures instruct us to regard christian ministers ?*

A. As the representatives of the Most High ; as stewards

of the mysteries of God ; as the dispensers of his holy word and sacraments, as the messengers and ambassadors of Christ. *g*

Q. Are there different ranks or grades in the ministry ?

A. There are not ; but by divine appointment all ministers are of equal rank. *h*

Q. What are the principal duties of ministers ?

A. They are to preach the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, to administer the sacraments, to admonish men of their duties, and by all proper means to edify the church of Christ.

Q. Are women allowed to exercise the office of the ministry ?

A. They are not, but on the contrary are expressly forbidden in scripture to do so *i*

Q. What are ministers authorized from God's holy word to require of their people ?

A. Obedience to their authority, and a decent and honorable support. *j*

Q. What duties do the people owe to their pastors ?

A. To honor and esteem, respect and revere them highly for their work's sake ; *k* to assist them in difficulties ; to vindicate their reputations ; and to aid them by their earnest prayers. *l*

OF THE MEANS OF GRACE.

Q. What are means of grace ?

A. Means of grace are all those things which have a tendency to impress the mind with divine truth, and in the right use of which we have reason to expect the influence of the holy spirit.

Q. Which are the principal of these means ?

A. Preaching, reading of the holy scriptures, prayers and the sacraments. *m* To these may be added likewise, self-examination, catechization, and confirmation.

Q. What will the faithful use of these means produce ?

A. The requisite changes in us which are necessary

g 1 Cor. 4-1. 1 Cor. 16-16. 2 Cor. 5-20. *h* Math. 23-8. *i* 1 Cor. 14-34. 1 Tim. 2-11, 12. *j* Heb. 13-17 1 Tim. 5-17, 18. 1 Cor. 9-14. *k* 1 Thess. 5-17, 18, 11 Thess. 5-25. *m* 1. Cor. 1-21. 2 Tim. 3-14, 15. Math. 21-22.

to salvation.

Q. Is there a possibility of our becoming true christians of having the assurance of the pardon of our sins. and the promise of eternal life, without the use of means?

A. There is not such a possibility.ⁿ

OF THE CONDITIONS OF SALVATION.

Q. What do we mean by the conditions of salvation?

A. We mean those conditions or terms as made known to us in the gospel, with which all must comply to obtain salvation.

Q. What are the conditions?

A. 1st. That we truly repent of all sin.^o

2d. That we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior ^p

3d. That we sincerely endeavor to lead a christian life, and to obey all the commands of God.^q

OF A NEW LIFE.

Q. What is conversion?

A. It is that change which the sinner experiences by which he becomes a new creature in Christ.

Q. By what other names is their change called in the scripture?

A. That of the new birth, and of regeneration.

Q. In what does this change consist?

A. In a turning with the heart from the love and practice of sin, to the love and practice of holiness, and in becoming perfectly conformed to the image of Christ.

Q. Is this change instantaneous?

A. It is instantaneous so far that there must be a point, a moment when our affections turn from one object to another; that is, from sin to holiness. But the entire change that is, the turning of the whole faculties and powers of the soul to Christ, is not instantaneous; inasmuch as the scriptures teach us that we are regenerated through the use of means,^r and these must of necessity be gradual.

ⁿRom. 10-13, 14. ^oActs 3-14. ^pActs 16-31. ^qMath. 10-22. Rev. 2-10. ^rJames 1-18. 1 Pet. 1-23.

Q. Is it always possible to know the precise time when this change commenced ?

A. It is not, and particularly with those who have enjoyed religious instruction from their youth.

Q. What are the evidences of this change ?

A. A supreme love to God and an earnest desire to obey him, and a love to the brethren.^s

Q. What is justification ?

A. It is that act of mercy by which we are declared to be entitled to the benefit of the Savior's death.

Q. What are these benefits ?

A. The remission of the punishment due to our sins, a right to eternal life and all the aid necessary to attain it.

Q. How do we obtain justification ?

A. Not by our own good works or merits, but through the merits of Christ which are imparted to us upon our attaining a living faith in him.

Q. How may we know that we are justified before God ?

A. By this ; if we sincerely repent of our sins, feel the imperfection of our best works, rely wholly for salvation upon the merits of Christ, and devote our souls and bodies to his service, then have we the assurance that we are thus justified.

Q. Is it possible for christians to fall from this state of justification ?

A. It is, as is evident from examples recorded in scripture as well as from the warnings given therein to christians to take heed lest they fall.^t

Q. What is sanctification ?

A. Sanctification is the state of being freed from the power of sin or a progressive conformity to the divine law.

Q. By whose agency are believers sanctified ?

A. The holy spirit, operating through the means of grace.^u

Q. Can believers become entirely sanctified, that is, be wholly free from sin and perfectly holy, in this life ?

A. They cannot, as is plainly evident from several declarations of scripture,^v as well as from the fact that we

^s1 Jno. 4-7. 1 Jno. 5-2. 1 Jno. 3-14. ^t1 Cor. 10-12. Rom. 11-20.
Ezek. 18-24. ^uRom. 15-16. ^v1 Jno. 1-8. Ja. 3-2. Rom. 4-18.

are taught by the Savior himself to implore pardon for our daily offences,*w* of which there would be no necessity had we committed no offence, and besides, if we could attain to a state of perfection on earth, we would no longer need the daily application to the blood of the Savior ; but might be justified by the deeds of the law, and take the glory to ourselves.

OF THE CONDITION OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH.

Q. *What is the condition of the soul after death ?*

A. The soul of the righteous is admitted into paradise,*x* where are all the saints enjoying happiness ; and that of the wicked is consigned to a place of misery, in company with lost spirits,*y* and where they will remain until the general judgment.

OF THE JUDGMENT.

Q. *When will the judgment take place ?*

A. At the end of the world.

Q. *Who will then be judged ?*

A. All mankind, both good and bad.

Q. *By what law will they be judged ?*

A. By the law of nature, and the Bible.*z*

Q. *Who will be judged by the law of nature ?*

A. Those who have had no revelation of God's will.

Q. *Who will be judged by the Bible ?*

A. Those who are acquainted with God's will as revealed in the Bible, or who have had opportunities to become acquainted with it.

Q. *For what will we be judged ?*

A. For our deeds done in the body ; for our sins both open and secret ; for omissions of duty ; for all our unholy actions, words, and thoughts.*a*

Q. *What will be the doom of the sinner ?*

A. Endless torments.*b*

Q. *What will be the reward of the righteous ?*

A. Endless happiness.*c*

*w*Luke, 11-4. *x*Luke, 23-43. *y*Luke, 16-23. *z*Rom. 2-12. *a*Eccl, 12-14. *b*Math. 25-35. *c*Math. 25-46.

It is the duty of parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ;*d* and of children to obey their parents in the Lord.*e*

It is the duty of husbands to love their wives, and not to be bitter against them ;*f* and of wives to reverence and be in subjection to their husbands.*g*

It is the duty of servants to do service with good will, not to purloin, but to show all good fidelity. *h*

It is the duty of neighbors to avoid all manner of strife, to live peaceably, and to deal justly with each other. *i*

It is our duty to respect and obey the laws of our country ;*j* to pray for the king and all in authority ;*k* to honor our spiritual and other teachers and to follow their instructions.*l*

It is our duty to relieve the wants of the poor ; to succor the distressed ; to befriend the widow and orphan ;*m* to visit the sick and afflicted.*n*

It is our duty to be merciful as we hope for mercy,*o* to forgive as we hope to be forgiven,*p* not to retaliate, but to return good for evil.*q*

It is our duty to avoid covetousness and avarice,*r* to be content with such things as we have, to preserve a good name,*s* to be diligent in our calling,*t* to be humble, to be prayerful, to be temperate in all things, to avoid improper places, and the conversation of the wicked,*u* and finally to secure the salvation of our souls without delay.*v*

PART III.

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

Article I.

OF GOD.

Our churches with one accord teach, that the decree of the Council of Nice, concerning the unity of the divine essence, and concerning the three persons, is true and ought to be confidently believed, viz. that there is one divine es-

*d*Eph. 6-4. *e*Eph. 6-1. *f*Col. 3-19. *g*1 Pet. 3-1. *h*Eph. 6-7. *i*Rom. 12-18. Heb. 2-7. *j*Rom. 13-1. *k*1 Tim. 1-1, 2, 3. *l*Heb. 13-7. *m*Pst 41-1. *n*James 1-27. *o*Luke 6-36. *p*Math. 6-14. *q*Math. 5-44. *r*1 Tim. 6-10. *s*Heb. 13-5. *t*Eph. 4-28. *u*Phil. 4-8. *v*Heb. 3-15.

sence, which is called and is God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, the Creator and preserver of things visible and invisible ; and yet that there are three persons, who are of the same essence and power, and are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And the term person they use in the same sense, in which it is employed by ecclesiastical writers on this subject to signify not a part or quality of something else, but that which exists of itself.

Article II.

OF NATURAL DEPRAVITY.

Our churches likewise teach, that since the fall of Adam, all men who are naturally engendered, are born with a depraved nature, that is, without the fear of God or confidence towards him, but with sinful propensities : and this disease, or natural depravity, is really sin, and still condemns and causes eternal death to those, who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit.

Article III.

OF THE SON OF GOD (AND HIS MEDIATORIAL WORK.)

They likewise teach, that the Word, that is the Son of God, assumed human nature, in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary, so that the two natures, human and divine, inseparably united in one person, constitute one Christ, who is true God and man, born of the virgin Mary ; who truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried, that he might reconcile the Father to us, and be a sacrifice not only for original sin, but also for all the actual sins of men.

He likewise descended into hell, and truly arose on the third day ; and then ascended to heaven, that he might sit at the right hand of the Father, might perpetually reign over all creatures, and might sanctify those who believe in him, by sending into their hearts the Holy Spirit who governs, consoles, quickens and defends them against the devil and the power of sin.

The same Christ will return again openly, that he may judge the living and the dead, &c. according to the apostolic creed.

Article IV.

OF JUSTIFICATION.

They in like manner teach, that men cannot be justified

before God by their own strength, merits, or works ; but that they are justified gratuitously for Christ's sake, through faith : when they believe they are received with favor, and that their sins are remitted on account of Christ, who made satisfaction for our transgressions by his death. This faith God imputes to us as righteousness.

Article V.

OF THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE (AND MEANS OF GRACE.)

In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministerial office has been instituted, whose members are to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments.

For through the instrumentality of the word and sacraments, as means of grace, the Holy Spirit is given, who in his own time and place, produces faith in those who hearken to the gospel message ; namely that God, for Christ's sake, and not on account of any merit in us, justifies those who believe in Christ.

Article VI.

CONCERNING NEW OBEDIENCE, (OR A CHRISTIAN LIFE.)

They likewise teach, that this faith must bring forth good fruits ; and that it is our duty to perform those good works which God has commanded, because he has enjoined them, and not in expectation of thereby meriting justification before him.

For remission of sins and justification are secured by faith ; as the declaration of Christ himself implies ; "when ye shall have done all those things, say, we are unprofitable servants."

Article VII.

OF THE CHURCH.

They likewise teach, that there will always be one holy church. The church is the congregation of the saints, in which the gospel is correctly taught, and the sacraments are properly administered.

And for the true unity of the church nothing more is required, than agreement concerning the doctrines of the gospel, and the administration of the sacraments.

Nor is it necessary, that the same human traditions, that is, rites and ceremonies instituted by men, should be every where observed. As Paul says ; "one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all," &c,

Article VIII.

WHAT THE CHURCH IS.

Although the church is properly a congregation of saints and true believers; yet, as in the present life, many hypocrites and wicked men are with them, it is lawful for us to receive the sacraments when administered by unconverted, agreeably to the declaration of our Savior, "that the Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat." &c.

Article IX.

OF BAPTISM.

Concerning baptism, our churches teach, that it is a necessary ordinance, that it is a means of grace, and ought to be administered also to children, who are thereby dedicated to God and received into his favor.

Article X.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

In regard to the Lord's supper they teach, that the body and blood of Christ are actually present under the emblems of bread and wine; and are dispensed to the communicants.

Article XI.

OF CONFESSION.

In regard to confession they teach, that private absolution ought to be retained in the churches; but that an enumeration of all our transgressions is not requisite in confession. For this is an impossibility, according to the declaration of the Psalmist; "Who can understand his errors?"

Article XII.

OF REPENTANCE.

Concerning repentance they teach, that those who have relapsed into sin after baptism, may at any time obtain pardon, when they repent; and that the church ought to grant absolution to such as manifest repentance.

But repentance properly consists of two parts. The one is contrition or dread on account of acknowledged sin.—The other is faith, which is produced by the gospel, or by means of absolution; which believes that pardon for sin is bestowed for Christ's sake; which tranquilizes the conscience and liberates it from fear. Such repentance must be succeeded by good works as its fruits.

They condemn the doctrine of such as deny, that those

who have once been justified, may lose the Holy Spirit.— In like manner those who contend, that some persons attain so high a degree of perfection in this life, that they cannot sin. They reject also those, who are unwilling to absolve such as have backslidden after baptism, even if they repent; as also those who teach that remission of sins is not obtained through faith; but require us to merit grace by our good works.

Article XIII.

OF THE USE OF THE SACRAMENTS.

Concerning the use of the sacraments, our churches teach, that they were instituted not only as marks of christian profession amongst men; but rather as signs and evidences of the divine disposition towards us, tendered for the purpose of exciting and confirming the faith of those who use them.

Hence the sacraments ought to be received with faith in the promises which are exhibited and proposed by them.— They therefore condemn those, who maintain, that the sacraments produce justification in their recipients as a matter of course, and who do not teach that faith is necessary, in the reception of the sacraments, to the remission of sins.

Article XIV.

OF CHURCH ORDERS.

Concerning church orders, they teach, that no person ought publicly to teach in the church, or to administer the sacraments, without a regular call.

Article XV.

OF RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES.

Concerning ecclesiastical ceremonies they teach, that those ceremonies ought to be observed, which can be attended to without sin, and which promote peace and good order in the church, such as certain holy-days, festivals, &c. Concerning matters of this kind however, caution should be observed, lest the consciences of men be burdened, as though such observances were necessary to salvation. Men should also be apprised that human traditionary observances, instituted with a view to appease God, to merit his favor, and make satisfaction for sins, are contrary to the gospel and doctrine of faith. Wherefore, vows and

traditionary observances concerning meats, days, &c., instituted to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins are useless and contrary to the gospel.

Article XVI.

OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS.

In regard to political affairs our churches teach, that legitimate political enactments are good works of God ; that it is lawful for christians to hold civil offices, to pronounce judgment and decide cases according to the imperial and other existing laws ; to inflict punishment, wage just wars and serve in them ; to make lawful contracts ; hold property ; to make oath when required by the magistrate, to marry and be married. They condemn the Anabaptists, who interdict to christians the performance of these civil duties. They also condemn those who make evangelical perfection consists not in the fear of God and in faith, but in the abandonment of all civil duties: because the gospel teaches the necessity of ceaseless righteousness of heart, whilst it does not reject the duties of civil and domestic life, but directs them to be observed as of divine appointment, and performed in the spirit of christian benevolence. Hence christians ought necessarily to yield obedience to the civil officers and laws of the land ; unless they should command something sinful ; in which case it is a duty to obey God rather than man.

Article XVII.

OF CHRIST'S RETURN TO JUDGEMENT.

Our churches also teach, that at the end of the world, Christ will appear for judgment ; that he will raise all the dead ; that he will give to the pious and elect, eternal life and endless joys ; but will condemn wicked men and devils to be punished without end. They reject the opinions of the Anabaptists, who maintain, that the punishment of devils and condemned men, will have an end : In like manner they condemn those, who circulate the Judaizing notion, that prior to the resurrection of the dead, the pious will engross the government of the world, and the wicked be every where oppressed.

Article XVIII.

OF FREE WILL.

Concerning free will our churches teach, that the human will possesses some liberty for the performance of civil duties, and for the choice of those things lying within the control of reason. But it does not possess the power, without the influence of the Holy Spirit, of being just before God, or yielding spiritual obedience ; for the natural man receiveth not the things which are of the spirit of God ; but this is accomplished in the heart, when the Holy Spirit is received through the word.

Article XIX.

OF THE AUTHOR OF SIN.

On this subject they teach, that although God is the creator and preserver of universal nature ; the cause of sin must be sought in the depraved will of the devil and wicked men, which when destitute of divine aid, turns itself away from God ; agreeably to the declaration of Christ, " When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own." John 8-44.

Article XX.

OF GOOD WORKS.

Our (writers) are falsely accused of prohibiting good works. Their publications on the ten commandments and similar subjects, show, that they gave good instructions concerning all the different stations and duties of life, and explained what course of conduct in any particular calling, is pleasing to God. Concerning these things preachers formerly said very little, but urged the necessity of puerile and useless works : such as certain holydays, fasts, brotherhoods, pilgrimages, worship of saints, rosaries, monastic vows, &c. These useless things, our adversaries, having been admonished, no longer teach as formerly. Moreover they now begin to make mention of faith, about which they formerly observed a marvelous silence. They now teach that we are not justified by faith and works. This doctrine is more tolerable than their former belief, and is calculated to impart more consolation to the mind.

Inasmuch, then, as the doctrine concerning faith, which should be regarded as the principal one by the church, had so long been unknown ; for all must confess, that concerning the righteousness of faith, the most profound silence reigned in their sermons, and the doctrine concerning works alone was discussed in the churches ; our divines have admonished the churches as follows ;

First, that our works cannot reconcile us to God, or merit the remission of sins, or grace, or justification ; but that this we can obtain only by faith, when we believe that we are accepted by grace, for Christ's sake who alone is appointed our mediator and propitiatory sacrifice, by which the Father is reconciled. He, therefore who expects to merit grace by his works, casts contempt on the merits of Christ, and is seeking the way to God, in his own strength, without the Savior ; who nevertheless has told us, " I am the way, the truth, and the life."

This doctrine concerning faith, is incessantly inculcated by the Apostle Paul. Ephes. 2. "Ye are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." &c.

And lest any should cavil at our interpretation and charge it with novelty, we state that this whole matter is supported by the testimony of the Fathers.

For Augustine devotes several volumes to the defence of grace, and the righteousness of faith, in opposition to the merit of good works, and Ambrosias, on the calling of the Gentiles, &c., indicates the same doctrine.

But although this doctrine is despised by the ignorant ; the consciences of the pious and timid find it a source of much consolation, for they cannot attain tranquility in any works, but in faith alone, when they entertain the confidential belief that, for Christ's sake, God is reconciled to them. Thus Paul teaches us, Rom. 5. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." This whole doctrine must be referred to the conflict in the conscience of the alarmed sinner, nor can it be otherwise understood.

Hence the ignorant and worldly minded are much mistaken, who vainly imagine that the righteousness of the christian is nothing else than what is common and in the language of philosophy is termed morality.

Formerly the consciences of men were harrassed by the doctrine of works, nor did they receive any consolation from the gospel. Some followed the dictates of conscience into deserts, and into monasteries; hoping there to merit the divine favor by a monastic life. Others invented different kinds of works, to merit grace, and make satisfaction for their sins.

There was therefore the utmost necessity, that this doctrine concerning faith in Christ, should be inculcated anew; in order that timid minds might find consolation, and know, that justification and the remission of sins, are obtained by faith in the Savior.

The people are also now instructed, that faith does not signify a mere historical belief, such as wicked men and devils have; but that in addition to historical belief, it includes an acquaintance with the consequences of the history, such as remission of sins by grace through Christ, righteousness, &c.

Now he who knows that the Father is reconciled to him through the Son, possesses a true acquaintance with God, confides in his providence and calls upon his name; and is therefore not without God, as are the Gentiles. For the devil and wicked men cannot believe the article concerning the remission of sins. But they hate God as an enemy, do not call upon his name, nor expect any thing good at his hands.

Augustine, in speaking of the the word faith, admonishes the reader that in scripture this word does not signify mere knowledge, such as wicked men possess, but that confidence or trust by which alarmed sinners are comforted and lifted up.

We moreover teach that the performance of good works is necessary, because it is commanded of God, and not because we expect to merit grace by them. Pardon of sins and grace are obtained only by faith. And because the Holy Spirit is received by faith; the heart of man is renovated and new affections produced, that he may be able to perform good works. Accordingly Ambrosius states, faith is the source of holy volitions and an upright life.

For the faculties of man, unaided by the Holy Spirit, are replete with sinful propensities, and too feeble to perform works that are good in the sight of God. They are moreover under the influence of Satan, who urges men to various crimes, and impious opinions and manifest offences; as may be seen in the examples of the philosophers who though they endeavored to lead perfectly moral lives, failed to accomplish their design, and were guilty of many notorious crimes.

Such is the imbecility of man, when he undertakes to govern himself by his own strength, without faith and the Holy spirit.

From all this it is manifest, that our doctrine, instead of deserving censure for the prohibition of good works, ought much rather to be applauded, for teaching the manner in which truly good works can be performed. For without faith, human nature is incapable of performing the duties either of the first or second table. Without it, man does not call upon God, nor expect any thing from him; but seeks refuge amongst men and reposes on human aid.

Hence, when faith and confidence in God are wanting, all evil desires and human schemes reign in the heart; as Christ says, "without me ye can do nothing," John 15., and the church responds, without thy favor, there is nothing good in man.

Article XXI.

OF THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

Concerning the invocation of saints, our churches teach, that the saints ought to be held in remembrance, in order that we may, each in his own calling, imitate their faith and good works; that the emperor may imitate the example of David, in carrying on war to expel the Turks from our country; for both are kings. But the sacred volume does not teach us to invoke saints or to seek aid from them. For it proposes Christ to us as our only mediator, propitiator, high priest and intercessor. On his name we are to call, and he promises, that he will hear our prayers, and highly approves of this worship, viz. that he should be called upon in every affliction, 1 John 2; "If any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father," &c.

PRAYERS FOR THE USE OF CHILDREN.

A MORNING PRAYER.

Almighty God, the maker of all things in heaven and earth! the darkness goes away and the daylight comes at thy command. Thou art good, and thou doest good continually. I thank thee, that thou hast taken care of me through the night, and that I am alive and well this morning. Save me O Lord, from all evil this day, and let me love and serve thee forever. Bestow upon me every good thing that I need, make me always afraid to offend thee, and let me live and die in thy favor. Hear my prayers, O Lord, and pardon my errors and sins, for the sake of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Our Father &c.

AN EVENING PRAYER.

Blessed and glorious God, the Father and Preserver of men! thou art about my path and my bed, and knowest all my ways and wants.—Look upon me this night with thy favor; pardon whatever in me is wrong; guard me by thy power and goodness; incline me ever to make it my delight to do thy will. Preserve and defend, likewise, O Lord, I beseech thee, my dear parents and relations, friends and benefactors, together with all that are under this roof; and help us and all people to love, and fear, and obey thee, that thou mayest love, and bless us, and make us happy in this world and in that which is to come, according to thy mercy in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Our Father which art in heaven, &c.

A GRACE BEFORE MEALS.

Sanctify, O Lord, these gifts of thy providence to our use, and enable us to receive them with a sense of thy love to us and to all mankind.

A GRACE AFTER MEALS.

Accept our thanks, O Lord for these, and all other blessings of thy providence, through Christ our Redeemer.

THE END.





